



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 14, 2011

For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 252-6933

http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/dc/Press_Releases/index.html

Man Sentenced to 45 Years in Prison For Murders of Wife and Her Two Children - Victims Stabbed in the Family's Apartment -

WASHINGTON - Joseph R. Mays, 46, was sentenced today to 45 years of incarceration on charges stemming from the March 2009 stabbing deaths of his wife and her two sons, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Mays, of Washington, D.C., pled guilty in June 2010 to three counts of second degree murder while armed. He was sentenced this morning to a total of 45 years - 15-year terms on each of the counts - by the Honorable Judge Gerald I. Fisher in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

During last year's plea hearing, Mays admitted that during the early afternoon of Saturday, March 21, 2009, he stabbed his wife, Erica Peters, 38, and her two sons, Dakota Peters, 10, and Eric Harper, 11, multiple times inside the apartment they shared in the 2000 block of Maryland Avenue NE. As the attack took place, Eric Harper called 911. His voice was identified as the one screaming into the phone - followed 20 seconds later by the defendant stating, "I told you all to leave me alone." Officers of the Metropolitan Police Department arrived shortly after the stabbings. All three of the victims, along with the defendant and his two-year-old daughter, were found inside of the second floor apartment, where there were no signs of forced entry.

Erica Peters and her two sons died as a result of their injuries. Only Mays and his daughter survived. An autopsy conducted on the remains of Erica Peters, Dakota Peters, and Eric Harper at the Medical Examiner's Office for the District of Columbia found the cause of death to be multiple stab wounds to the head and body.

In announcing the sentencing, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the work of Metropolitan Police Detectives Anthony Paci, Sean Cain, Dwayne Partman, Robert Arrington, Michael Murphy, and Edwin Truesdale of the Violent Crime Branch, along with Mobile Crime Officers Valerie Campbell and Tina Ramadahn, as well as Fifth District Officers Atubakr Karim and

Page -2-

Tyshena Wallace. He also praised Paralegal Specialist Kelly Margaret Blakeney and Victim Witness Advocate Marcia Rinker of the U.S. Attorney's Office. Finally, he commended Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles W. Cobb, who investigated and prosecuted the case.

11-011

###